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SUBJECT: CPA TELECOM TEAM RECEIVES OFFERS OF HELP FROM GOJ

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY:

The CPA telecommunications team met with the Jordanian Minister of Information and Communications Technologies, Minister of Planning and a representative from the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission(TRC) on July 30. Discussion with GOJ officials centered around partnerships and assistance that the GOJ and the Jordanian private sector could provide to the CPA. Specifically the GOJ offered assistance in training Iraqi officials and civil servants, connecting the Jordanian fiber network to the Iraqi fiber network and guidance in the construction of the future Iraqi Regulatory Body.

End Summary

¶2. (SBU) While in Amman for the Iraqi Mobile Telecommunications Tender Conference, CPA officials David Leech, Dr. Daniel Sudnick and Iraqi Telecommunication and Post Company(ITPC) executives Dr. Shakir Abdullah and Abdul Latif met with Minister of Information and Communications Technology Dr. Fawaz H. Zu'bi. Zu'bi stressed his willingness to assist the CPA and the importance of a successful launch of a mobile network in Iraq for the entire region. However, Zubi noted that the five percent foreign government ownership cap restricted Jordanian mobile telecommunications firms, and most other Arab mobile operators, from competing. Abdullah informed Zu'bi that Iraq's fiber network reached to the border of Jordan, and requested assistance from the Jordanian government in connecting the two countries fiber networks. Zu'bi advised the CPA that Jordan's fiber network came to 150 km of the border, and that he would immediately look into quickly extending the network to the Iraqi border. Zu'bi also described the MoICTs involvement in the Jordan Education Initiative, and that utilizing ICT was an extremely important part of any planned Iraqi education program.

¶3. (SBU) In a separate meeting, Minister of Planning Bassem Awadallah also expressed his willingness to assist the CPA in anyway possible. Awadallah offered to pay for and provide training to Iraqi citizens in any area, but placed particular emphasis on Jordan's strengths in ICT. He suggested structuring three to six month training programs at the MoICT and TRC. CPA officials and Awadallah also discussed how to minimize the negative consequences from the privatization of the ITPC - particularly the resulting job losses. Awadallah stated that the key to a Jordan's successful privatization of Jordan Telecom was the restructuring of the telecommunications sector to create open markets where the private sector could thrive. In Jordan's case, Awadallah claimed that within two years of privatization, downsized personnel from Jordan Telecom had been absorbed by other telecom firms. Similarly to Minister Zu'bi, Awadallah expressed his concern with the five percent foreign government ownership cap. He also noted that he would speak to Jordan Telecom and exert "pressure," if necessary, to ensure that the Jordan fiber network was connected as quickly as possible to the Iraqi network.

¶4. (SBU) The CPA telecom team also met with a senior advisor to the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission to discuss the future Iraqi Regulatory Authority. The advisor described past experiences of the TRC in setting up a new regulatory body and provided the CPA officials with proposed guidelines for the future Iraqi Telecommunications Regulatory Authority which the TRC had previously drafted for CIP Ambassador Gross.

¶5. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
HALE